

For immediate release

March 15, 2017

Contact

Anders Croy

Communications Director – House Democratic Office

(850) 488-9622

Anders.Croy@myfloridahouse.gov

Representative Sean Shaw Files Legislation to Prevent Civil Rights Being Taken Away From Non-Violent Felons

Tallahassee, FL- Representative Sean Shaw (D-Tampa) has filed [**HB 177**](#) to ensure that non-violent felons do not have their civil rights suspended as an element of their sentence.

Under current law, those who are convicted of any felony lose the right to vote, the right to sit on a jury, the right to hold public office, and the right to possess a firearm, unless they are granted the restoration of their civil rights by the state Office of Executive Clemency. If enacted, this bill would end the suspension of civil rights for those convicted of a non-violent felony.

Florida accounts for more than 25% of the people disenfranchised by this law nationwide, far more than any other state. If enacted, the bill would make necessary changes to a system that currently deprives 1.7 million Floridians, about 10% of our citizens, the right to vote.

“Even if the sentence has been served, a felony conviction in the State of Florida is a lifelong punishment,” asserted **Representative Sean Shaw**. “It is unreasonable to expect someone to fully reintegrate back into society when they are being treated as a second class citizen. If we are serious about sustaining a fair system of justice, we must send a message that if a person is convicted of a non-violent crime their rights won’t be taken away.”

####